

# **The Inexorable March to Online Only Journal Subscriptions:**

**Varied Criteria, Unexpected Ramifications,  
and Coping Strategies**

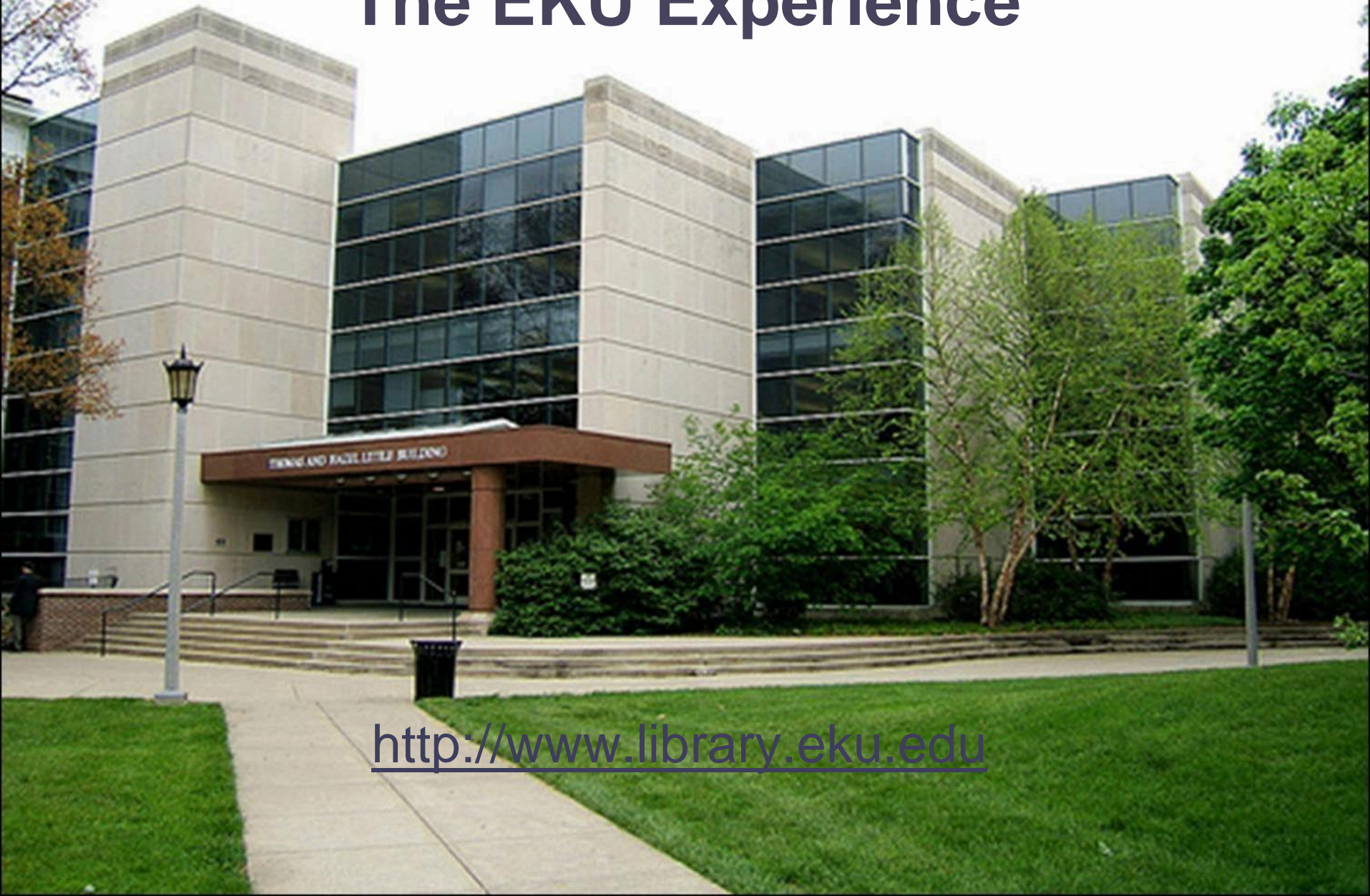
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Pat Thompson, University of the South

ER&L Conference  
Atlanta, GA

March 20 , 2008

# The ECU Experience



<http://www.library.ecu.edu>



# The Sewanee Experience



<http://library.sewanee.edu>

# Trends Observed in the Literature

➤ The major forces driving adoption of electronic-only journals are

**1. User expectations/demands**

**2. Reallocation of resources to support that demand**

➤ Approximately 60% of the universe of some 20,000 active peer-reviewed journals is available in electronic form. (Johnson & Luther, p. 9)

➤ Journals from smaller publishers and those from outside of the developed world often are published **only in print**.

➤ In 2006, 37% of research libraries' subscriptions were e-only; 70% were e-only or e+print. (Prabha, p. 4-13)

➤ In 2004-05, ARL libraries spent an average of 37% of acquisitions budget on e-resources. Some spent over 50%. Smaller libraries may spend more due to consortial licensing deals. (Johnson & Luther, p. 16)

➤ The leading factor influencing the collection of electronic resources is stated library policy, followed closely by faculty and student preference. (Publisher's Communication Group, p. 3)

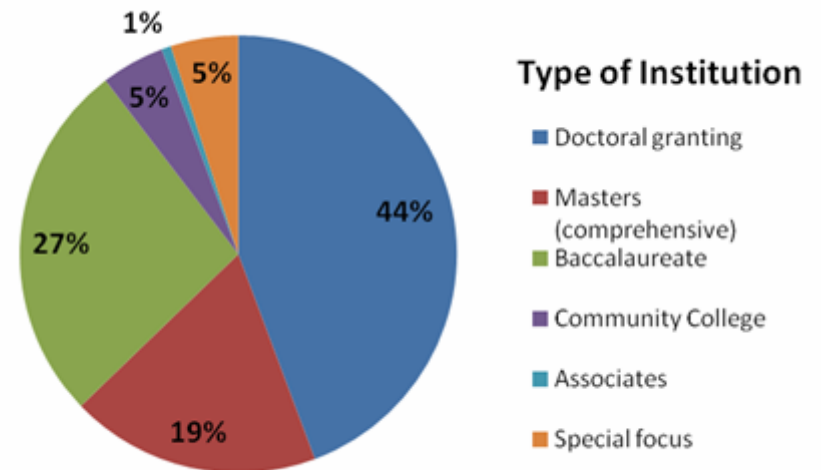
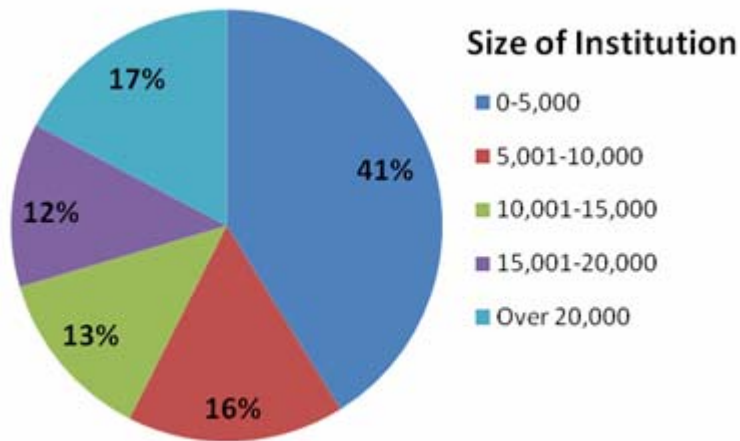


# The Survey

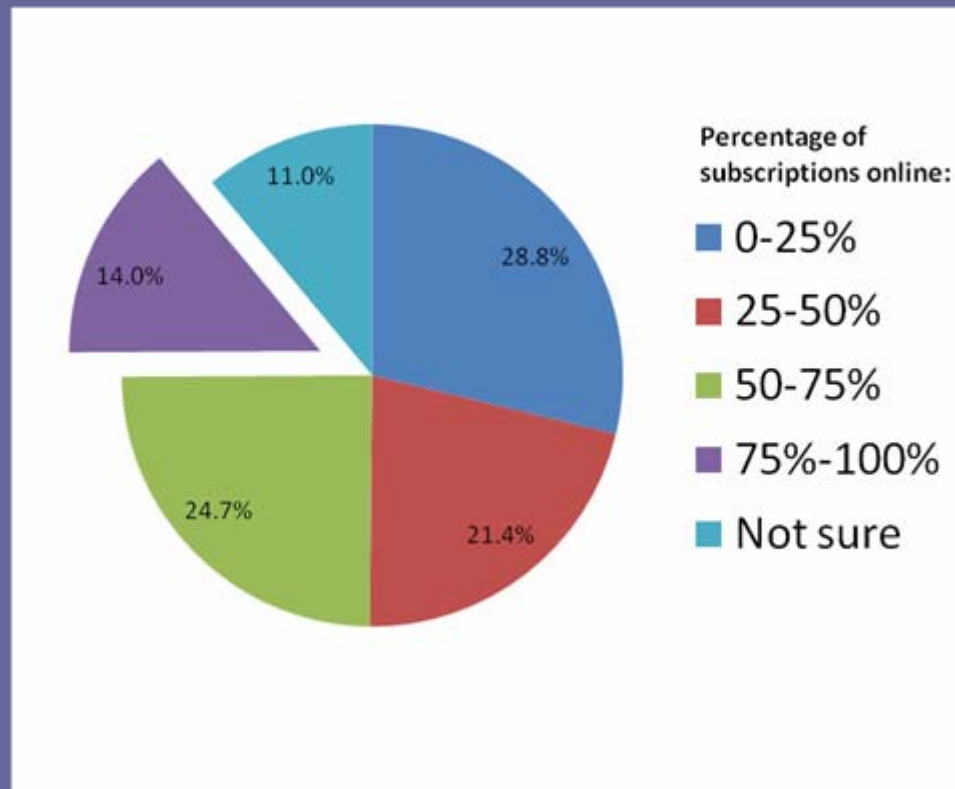
*For complete survey results, go to: <http://www2.sewanee.edu/its/pthompson/erl08>*

- The goal of the researchers was to get a snapshot of general institutional attitudes about moving journal titles from print format to online only format and to determine whether these attitudes differed between size and/or type of institution. *This was a self-selecting survey; it was **not** a randomly sampled, scientifically controlled survey.*
- It was distributed using the University of the South's institutional Survey Monkey subscription.
- A link to the survey and request for participation was sent to the following discussion lists on January 31, 2008.
  - ❖ **SERIALST: Serials in Libraries Discussion Forum** [SERIALST@LIST.UVM.EDU](mailto:SERIALST@LIST.UVM.EDU)
  - ❖ **Oberlin Group Colleges Technical Services list** [techserv@oberlingroup.org](mailto:techserv@oberlingroup.org) and **Collection Development list** [colldev@oberlingroup.org](mailto:colldev@oberlingroup.org)
  - ❖ **Appalachian College Association list** [alice\\_ps@lyris.acaweb.org](mailto:alice_ps@lyris.acaweb.org)
  - ❖ **COLLDV-L** [colldv-l@usc.edu](mailto:colldv-l@usc.edu)
  - ❖ **ERIL-L : Electronic Resources in Libraries list** [ERIL-L@LISTSERV.BINGHAMTON.EDU](mailto:ERIL-L@LISTSERV.BINGHAMTON.EDU)
- Responses were anonymous.
- The survey was open from January 31, 2008 to February 15, 2008.
- 272 completed surveys were submitted.

# Survey Respondent Demographics

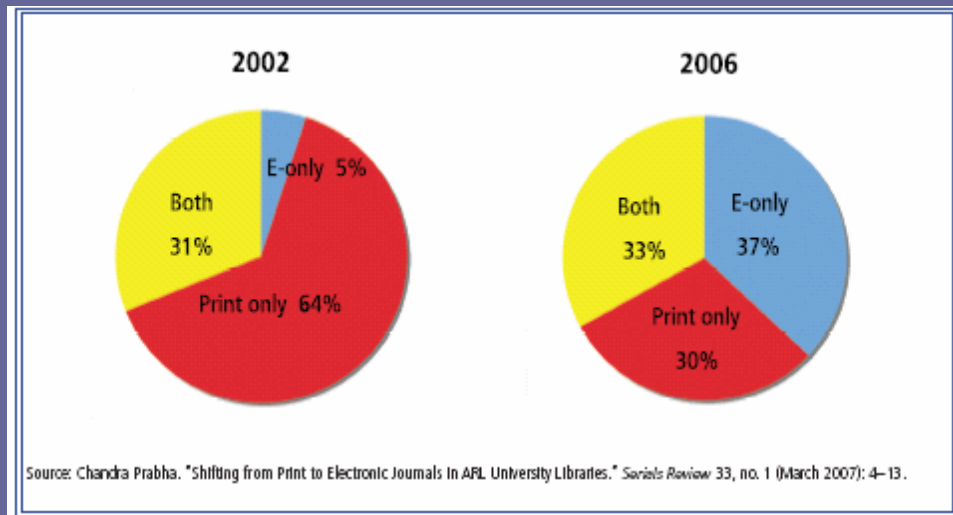


# Percentage of respondents reporting online only current journal subscriptions.

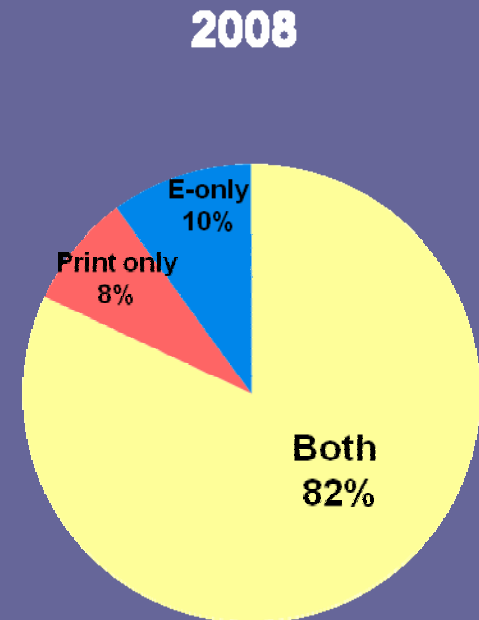




# The E-only Continuum



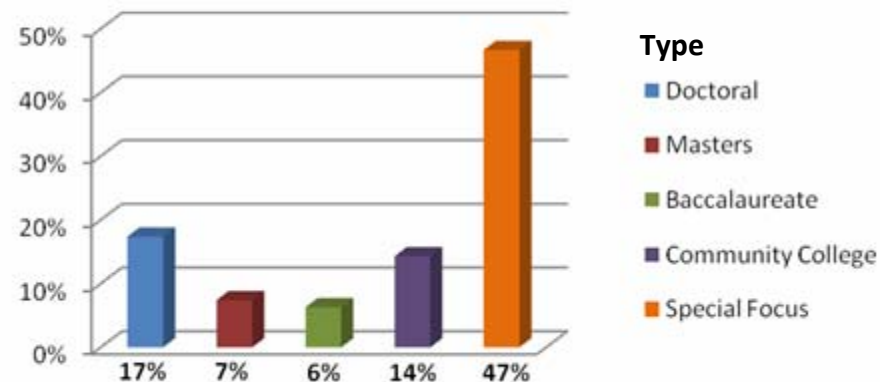
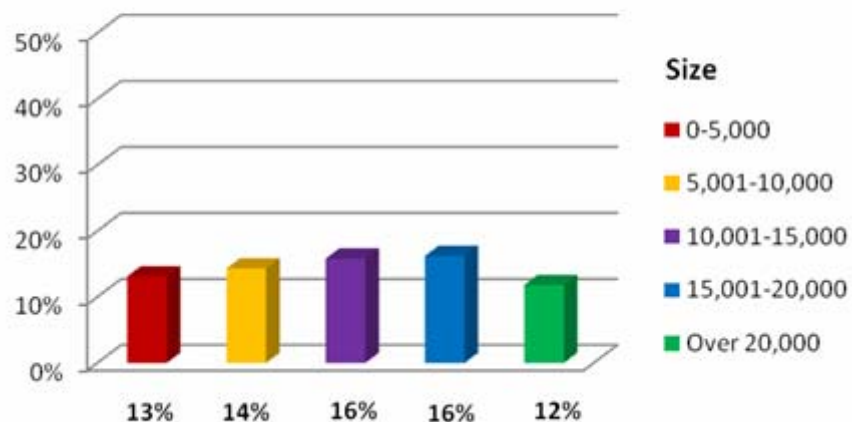
Source: Chandra Prabha. "Shifting from Print to Electronic Journals in ARL University Libraries." *Serials Review* 33, no. 1 (March 2007): 4-13.



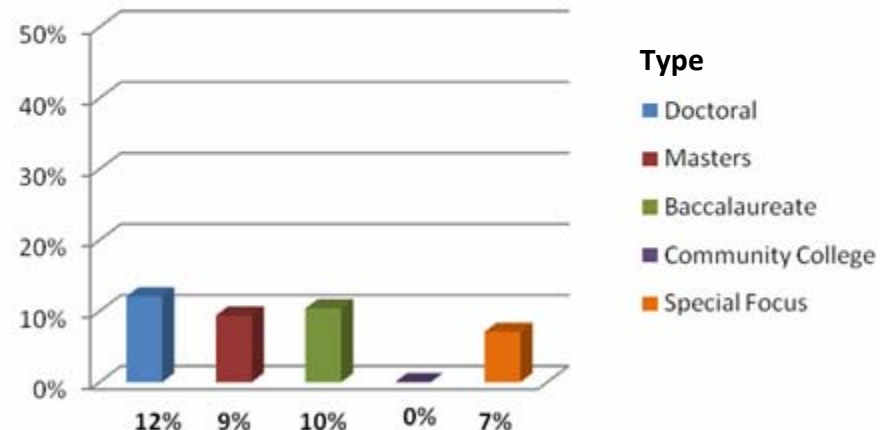
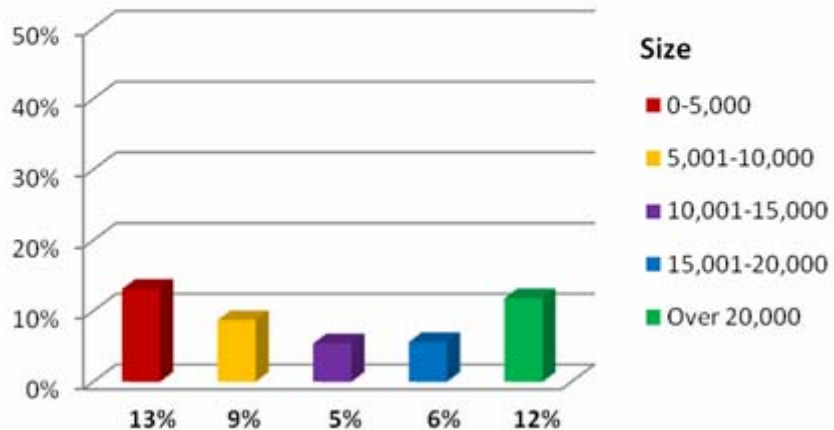
Source: February 2008 self-selected survey of academic libraries (not limited to ARL libraries)



## Institutions reporting 75-100% Online Only subscription



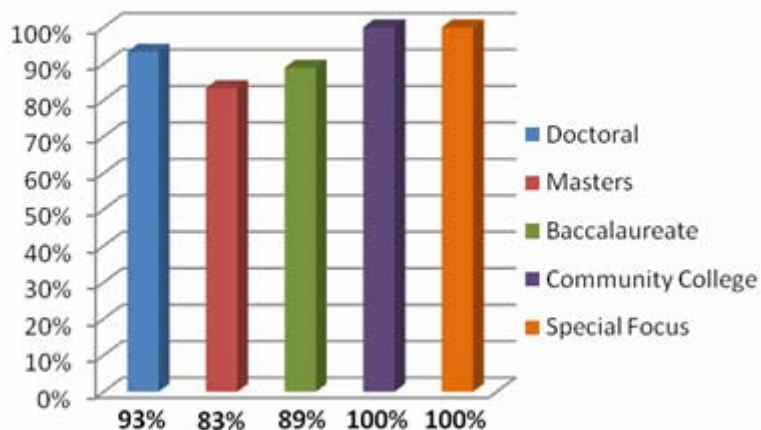
## Institutions reporting moving to an "Online Only policy"



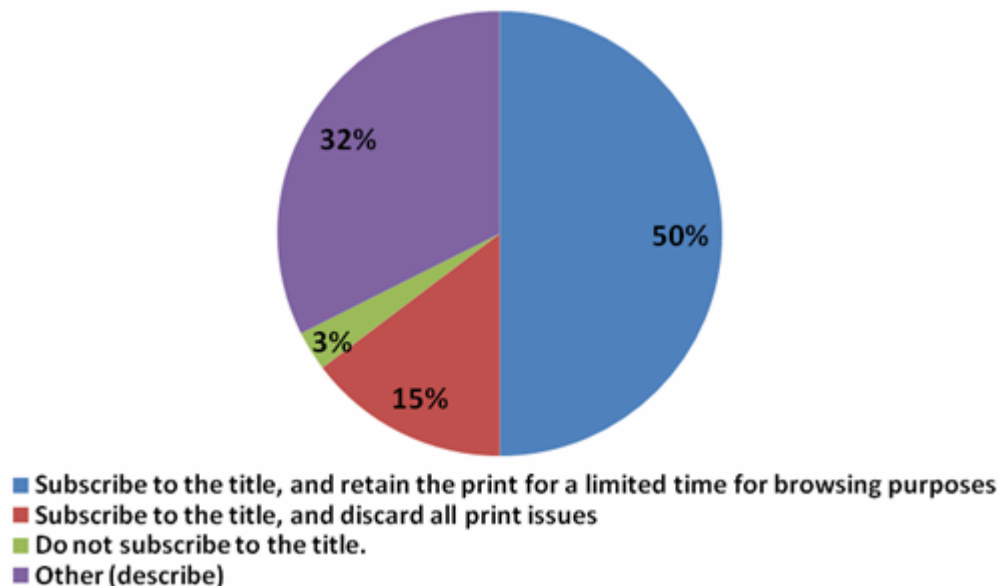
# Snapshot of “Online Only” Libraries

Reasons for Moving "Online Only"	Most important	Very important	Somewhat important	Less important	Least important
Patrons prefer online only	40%	35%	25%	0%	0%
To get access to a larger number of resources for the same amount of dollars	40%	20%	35%	5%	0%
To save physical space.	27%	30%	20%	10%	13%
To provide better access for distance and online students	21%	29%	21%	21%	8%

Percentage of “Online Only” Libraries who buy a title in print if it is **not** available online.



“Online Only” Libraries’ approach to dual format titles.



# Snapshot of “Print Only” Libraries

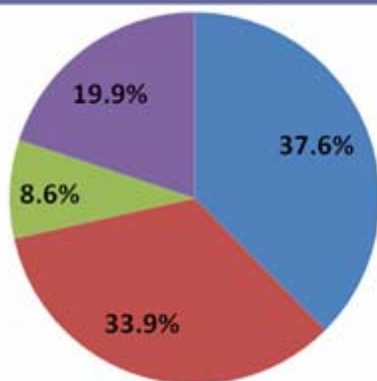
Why retain all print?	Response Percent
Our library cannot afford to participate in any 3rd party archiving (Portico, LOCKSS, CLOCKSS)	46%
We do not trust perpetual access clauses in license agreements	31%
Faculty opinion	31%
We do not trust 3rd party archiving	15%

Open Responses to this question:

- *Change is difficult*
- *Like to have multiple ways to access a title*
- *Don't have space or cost issues “yet”*
- *Only offer online content through aggregators*
- *Not available online*
- *Accreditation purposes*

# Snapshot of “Dual Format” Libraries

Criteria for Retention of Print	Most important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Least important	N/A
Exorbitant prices for the online only product	46%	40%	10%	2%	1%	0%
Electronic version does not include all content available in print version	44%	37%	12%	3%	1%	1%
Backfiles are rolling (i.e., after a certain number of years, the content is no longer available)	41%	38%	16%	5%	0%	1%
Publisher does not allow post-cancellation access	32%	43%	18%	1%	1%	4%
Restrictions to online access, such as remote access disallowed, or no IP recognition	32%	46%	16%	3%	1%	3%
Inadequate interface or usability problems in the electronic version	28%	36%	26%	6%	1%	3%
Low image quality in the electronic version	23%	42%	23%	7%	2%	3%
Print format has heavy use for a particular title	21%	36%	27%	10%	3%	4%
Requested in print by faculty	18%	36%	29%	11%	4%	2%
Lag time between print and online availability	11%	27%	38%	11%	4%	2%
Publisher does not have any type of 3rd party archiving agreements (Portico, LOCKSS, CLOCKSS)	9%	39%	35%	16%	4%	3%



**Dual Format approach to print**

- Bind the print
- Retain the print for a limited time
- Discard all print issues
- Other



# More Criteria for Retaining Print

- “Electronic Version not compliant with online accessibility standards”
- “If the title supports a particular, unique collection our library holds”
- “Whether it is OpenURL compliant”
- “Whether it participates in PubMed Linkout”
- “Publisher is difficult to work with or clearly has no clue what they are doing or want to do with online access”
- “Restrictions to ILL of eTitles at all, whether we print off and scan and send (such a pain!) or just send the pdf”
- “Vendor doesn't allow e-reserves for their title(s).”
- “Whether periodical is indexed in other databases”
- “Whether a periodical requires a stand-alone subscription, as opposed to being in a database with other high-quality periodicals (i.e. users can expect a lot of good results for the work of learning the search interface)”
- “Most of our online only access is thru consortial subscriptions to which we contribute. The consortium strives to purchase e-journal content and mounts that locally, insuring archival access, standard interface etc.”

# Ramifications & Coping Strategies

Ramification of shifting to e-only	Coping Strategy
<p>Staff time and work complexity ➤ actually increases for online resource management (<i>contrary to literature indicating that print processing is more time consuming</i>) (EKU)</p>	<p>Reorganization of staffing (moved a faculty line from reference to eResources ) (EKU)</p> <p>Shift technical services staff gradually to more hybrid jobs (EKU)</p> <p>Reduce or eliminate binding (EKU)</p> <p>➤ Implement an ERM</p> <p>➤ Keep print for titles that make it difficult to set up institutional e-subscriptions</p>
<p>Budget problems</p>	<p>➤ “If print only is cheaper than print + online, then we will continue with the print only. If it's equal, we'll subscribe to the title and retain the print (but we are currently not binding anything - no budget for binding. we use princeton files).” (SURVEY RESPONSE)</p> <p>➤ “Rapidly cancelling print” - (SURVEY RESPONSE)</p> <p>➤ Shift funds from monographs to serials (Sewanee)</p> <p>➤ Analyze usage stats to identify and drop titles not being used</p> <p>➤ Take advantage of consortial "deals" with large publishers - although this can have its own ramifications (when institutions drop out of deal and you lose access to those titles, etc.) (Sewanee)</p> <p>➤ Drop packages from publishers that require “spend commitments.” (EKU)</p>

# Ramifications & Coping Strategies

Ramification of shifting to e-only	Coping Strategy
Faculty requesting retention of print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ “We are retaining print in many cases because faculty demand we have it, even though it is rarely or never used. We are trying to move them away from this model by showing them how much additional money we are spending just to get print issues, money that could be spent on new resources”. (survey response)</li> <li>➤ Move incrementally from print to electronic (Sewanee)</li> <li>➤ Work with faculty committee to develop policies</li> </ul>
Inability to ensure future access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ “For journals that are core to our mission I do not trust that we will always have the budget to purchase and I do not want to lose access to what was paid for. With print, we will always have access to what was paid for. Print also still works when the power goes out.” - (SURVEY RESPONSE) Move to a philosophy of access vs. ownership for some types of materials (Sewanee)</li> <li>➤ Purchase digital back files when possible (Sewanee)</li> <li>➤ Identify publishers with "library friendly" policies - publishers who have agreements with LOCKSS, CLOCKSS, JSTOR, Portico, etc. Shows a commitment to providing continual access to digital content. (EKU)</li> <li>➤ Communicate with publishers the need for ongoing access to online titles</li> <li>➤ Cooperative collection activities with consortial groups - i.e. one library in group agrees to maintain print "copy of record" for the group - the other libraries can stop subscribing</li> </ul>

# Discussion

- Questions?
- What are you currently experiencing at your libraries?
- What are some of your local strategies?



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“King Penguins marching in wind and blowing snow”

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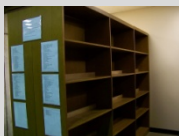
EKU Crabbe Library entrance

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Sewanee duPont Library entrance

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# Thank you !

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